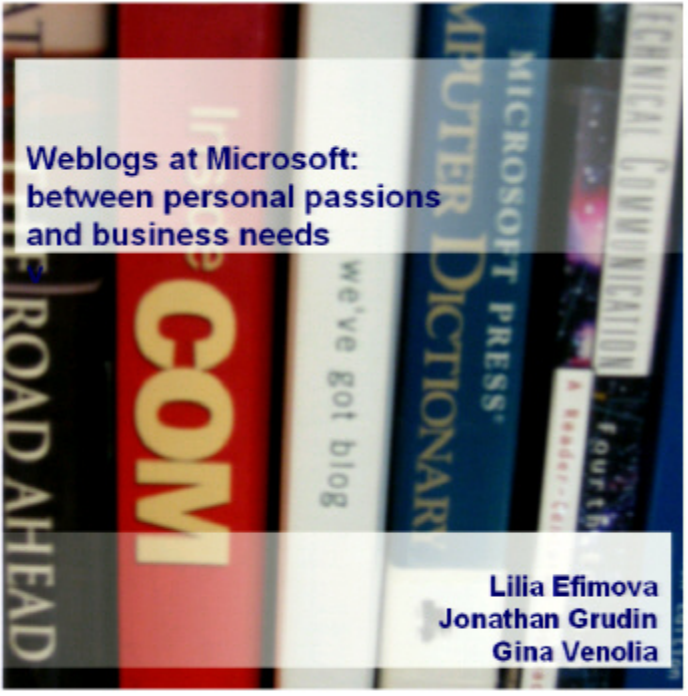

Weblogs at Microsoft:
between personal passions
and business needs
Lilia Efimova
Jonathan Grudin
Gina Venolia
ROAD AHEAD
COM
we've got blog
MICROSOFT PRESS'
MPUTER DICTIONARY
ECHNICAL COMMUNICATION

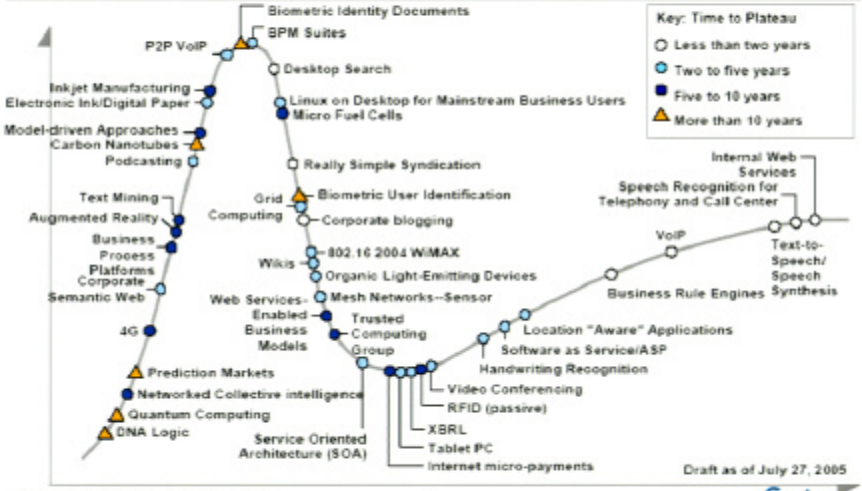
Beware the Hype Cycle



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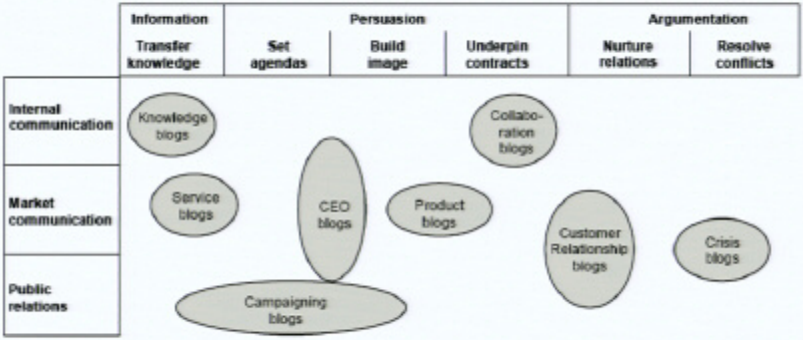
Emerging Technologies Hype Cycle 2005



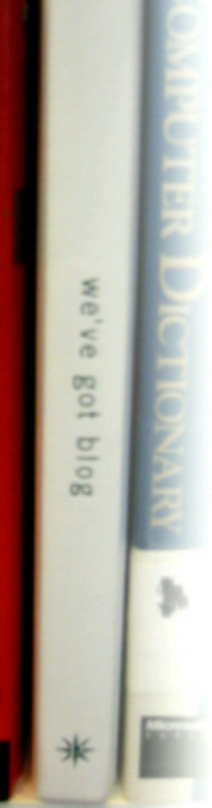
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Deployment possibilities for corporate blogs

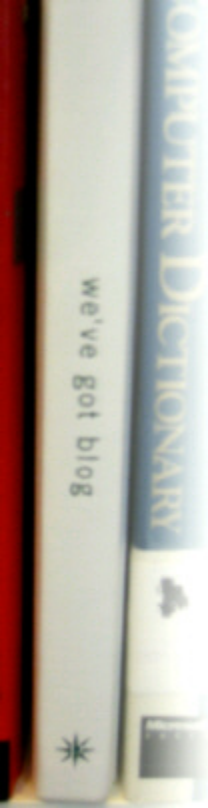


Sources: Zerfaß (2005), DB Research



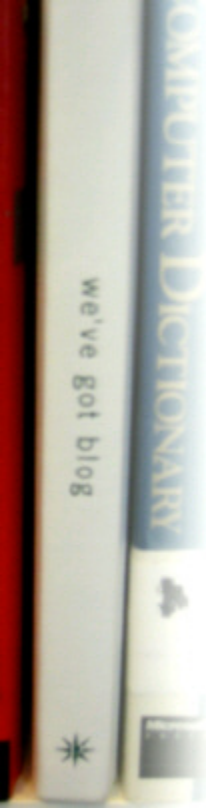
Questions

- Where, how and why Microsoft people blog?
- How personal should you get in your weblog?
- What happens when blogging becomes part of your objectives?
- What is the business impact of blogging?
- How different are internal and external blogs? Product blogs? Blogs of Microsoftees outside Redmond?
- What could be done to make blogging more effective?



The study

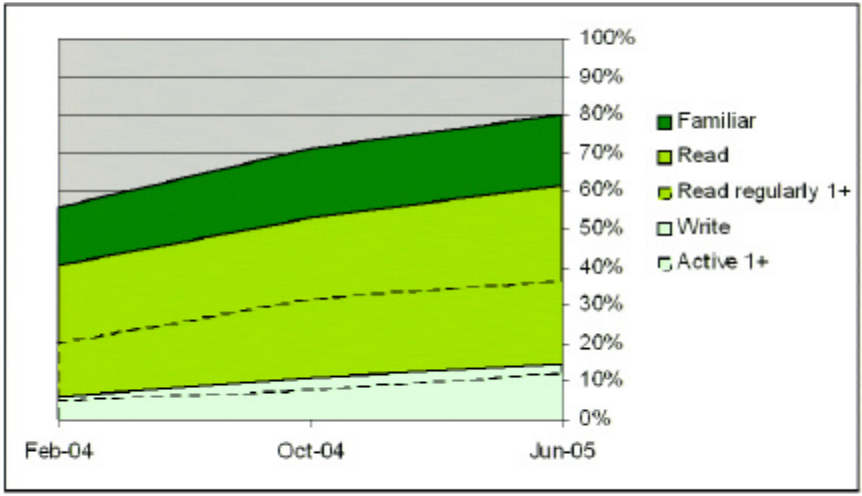
- 39 interviews (in person and by phone)
  - Bloggers: internal/external, high profile/long tail, personal/work-related, different countries, groups and levels
  - People supporting internal and external blogs
  - Teams working on MSN Spaces and SharePoint
  - LCA, WaggEd
  - Two VPs



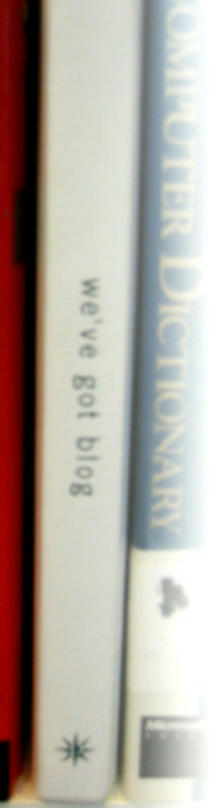
Blogging at Microsoft

- "No policy" policy or "Don't be stupid"
- Support from the top
  - more transparency
  - customer connection
  - just one more communication channel
- LCA, WaggEd
  - see benefits next to the risks
  - strive for integrated support
- Infrastructure
  - blogs.msdn.com, blogs.technet.com
  - www.microsoft.com/communities/blogs/PortalHome.mspx
  - http://blogs
  - DLs
  - MSW resources

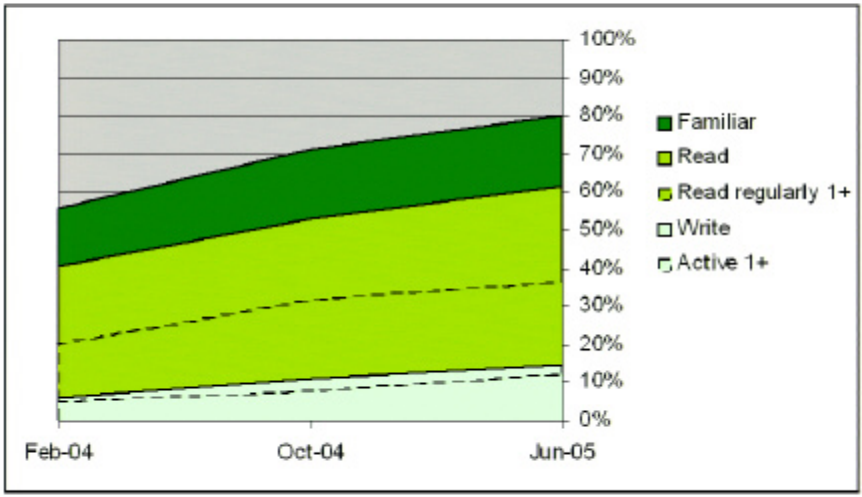
Blogging by Microsoft employees



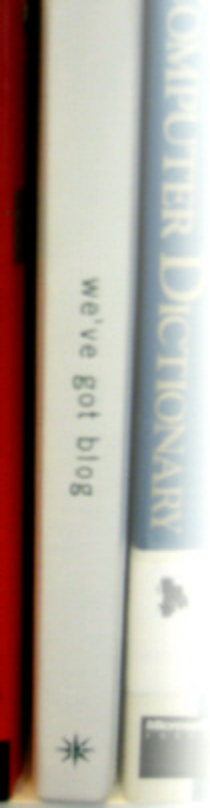
Where are the bloggers?



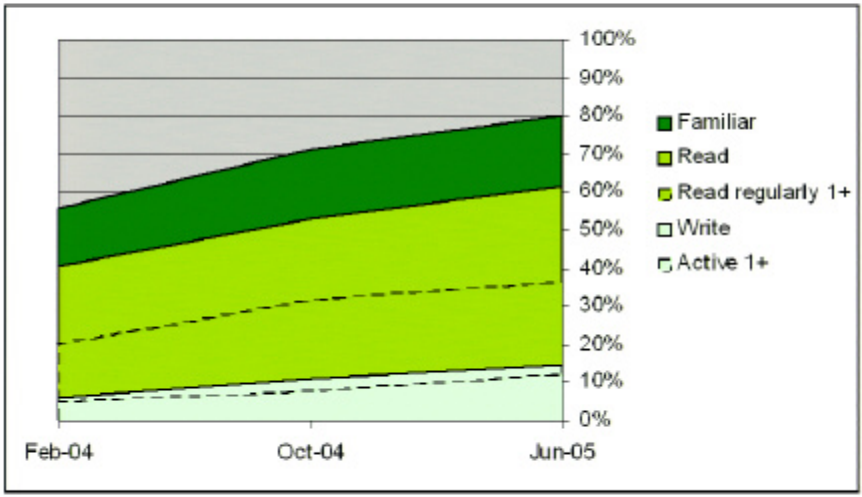
Blogging by Microsoft employees

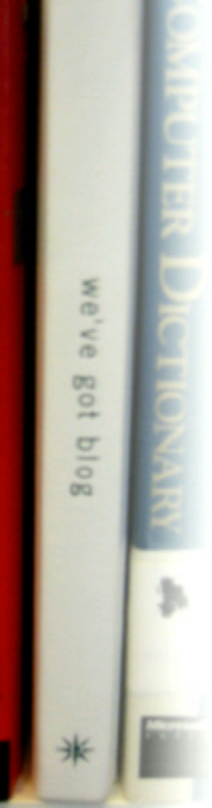


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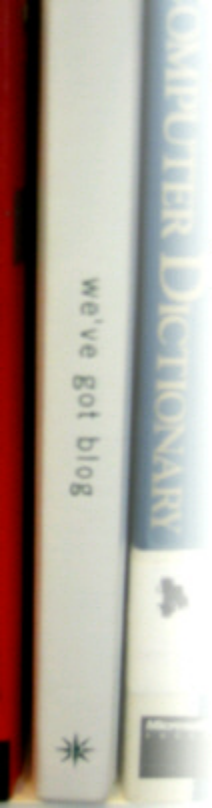
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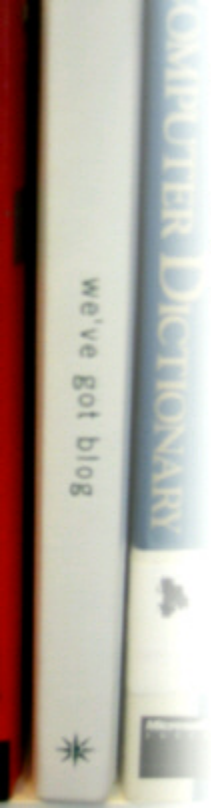
Where are the bloggers?

- MSDN+Technet ~2000



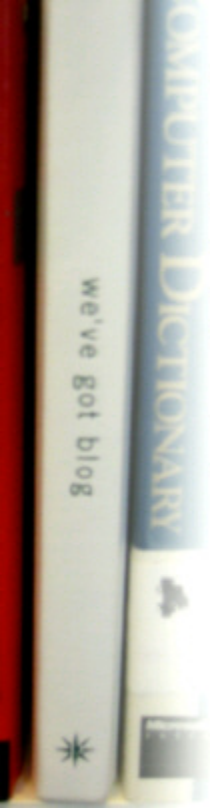
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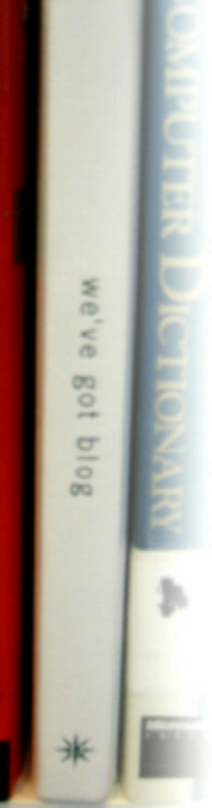
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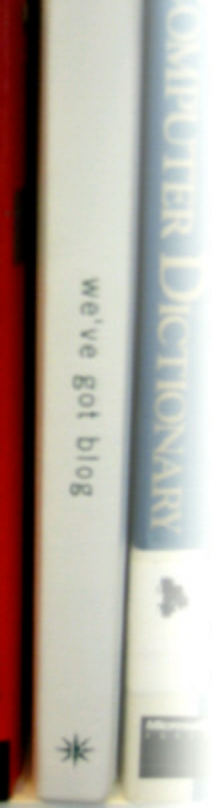
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- Microsoft hosted initiatives - The Spoke, Wallop, gotdotnet



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- Microsoft hosted initiatives - The Spoke, Wallop, gotdotnet
- Own servers and externally hosted blogs

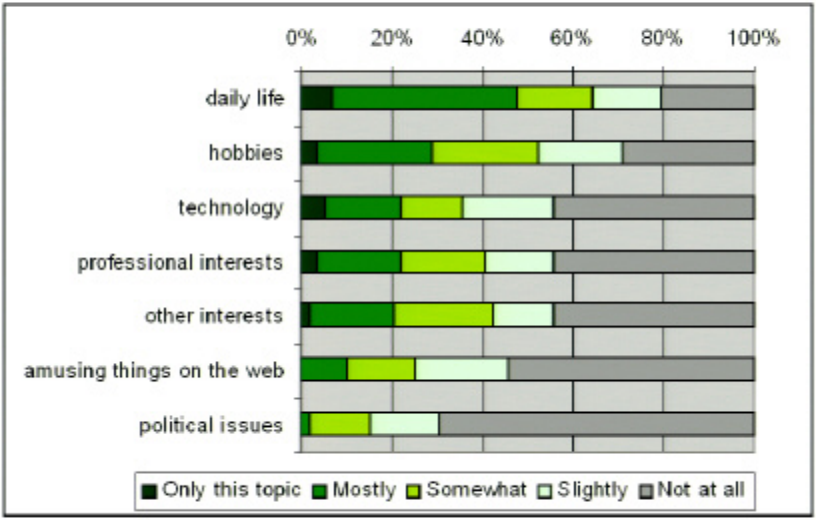


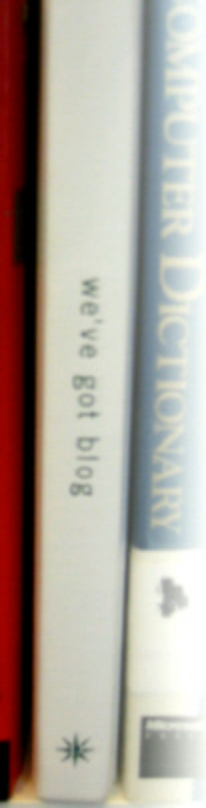
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- Own servers and externally hosted blogs

- Registered – 700+
- Estimated (survey June 2005) – 7000+

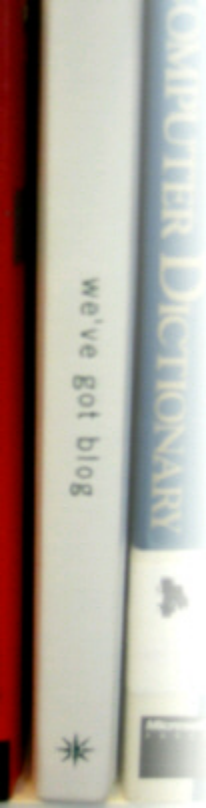
What do they blog about?





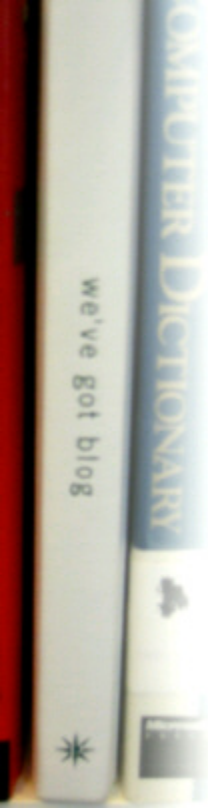
Choosing where to blog…

- MSDN or Technet
  - Easy start, Microsoft affiliation, visibility for beginners
  - But
    - Blogging about personal things?
    - Blogging in other languages?
    - Non-tech blogging?
- MSN people seem to choose blogging at MSN
- blogs.microsoft.fr, blogs.microsoft.nl – local communities
- blogs.gotdotnet.ru – MS people and developers in one space
- Own server/hosted externally
  - More control, clear ownership, anonymity if necessary
  - Avoiding strong affiliation with Microsoft



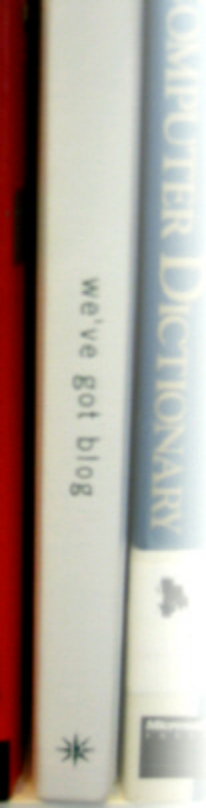
Motivations (work-related blogs mainly)

- Human face: "I'm tired of being called evil"
- Sharing passion for own work
- Connect with customers
  - helping with problems
  - getting feedback and ideas
  - telling stories behind products and decisions made
  - talking now instead of waiting for the product to ship
- Providing information
  - making where MS stands clear
  - correcting wrong information
  - faster way to publish info than official channels
  - less gatekeepers
- Purpose related (accelerate use of MS tools, get feedback on features, provide information, advertise events, promote MS jobs)



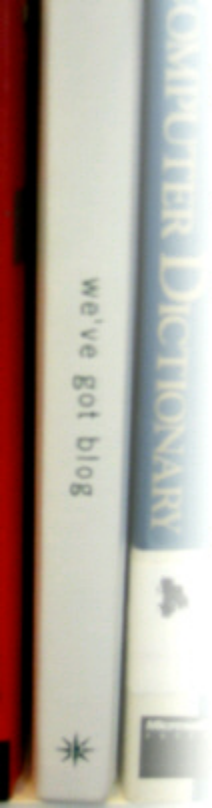
Effects

- It's fun and rewarding (to be help, to know what is happening in the "real world", to be known)
- Customer connection
  - changing Microsoft public face (customers + new hires)
  - faces behind products
  - stories behind products
  - direct communication channel
  - high discoverability
- Accelerated need for change
  - as an organization
  - product feedback



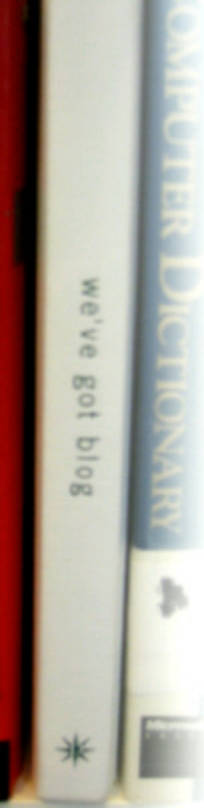
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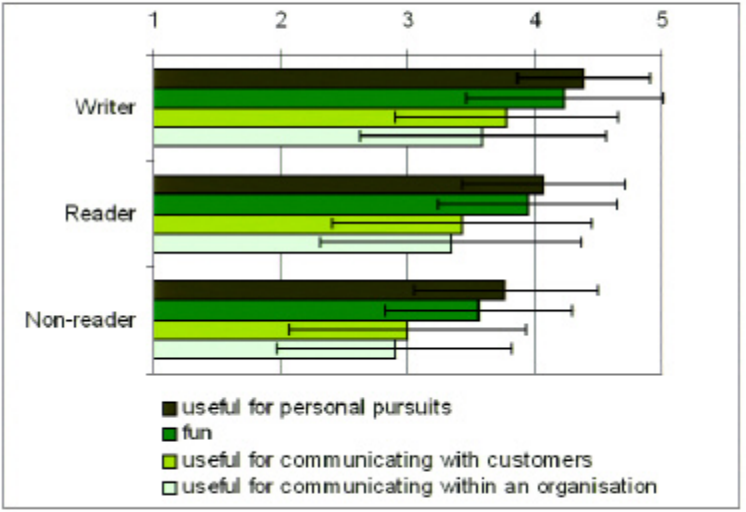
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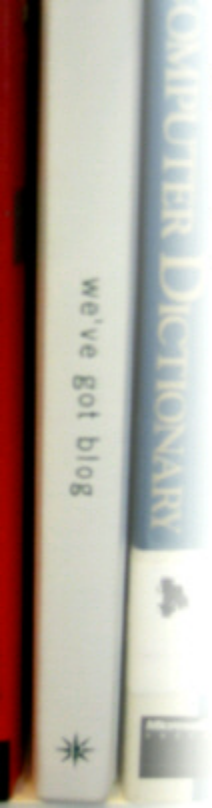


Effects (2)

- Blog as a documenting/drafting/sharing space
  - use as personal archive or bookmarking space
  - share links to blog posts for FAQ
  - reuse content for portal articles, thinking about books
  - stop worrying about spamming people
- Knowledge sharing within the company
  - unexpected connections with others internally
  - overcoming time barriers to learn new things about technologies and tools
- Work impact
  - one person fired… many had to fight
  - takes a lot of time + email overload
  - improved job security
  - personal passions recognized → changed responsibilities

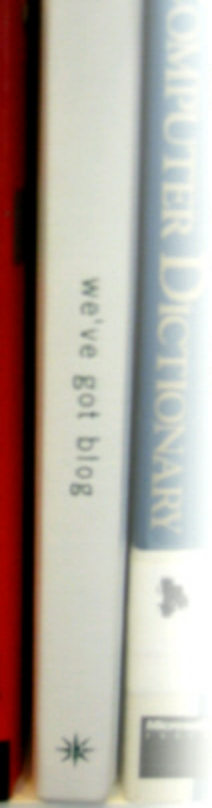
General attitudes





Internal blogs

- Internal blogs are not officially supported
- Many people we talked to do not see much value of internal blogging, do not read or write internal weblogs

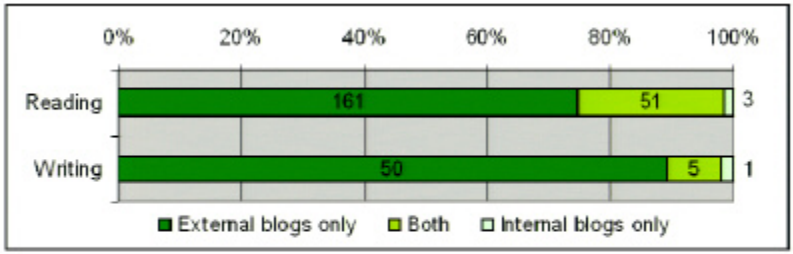


Internal blogs

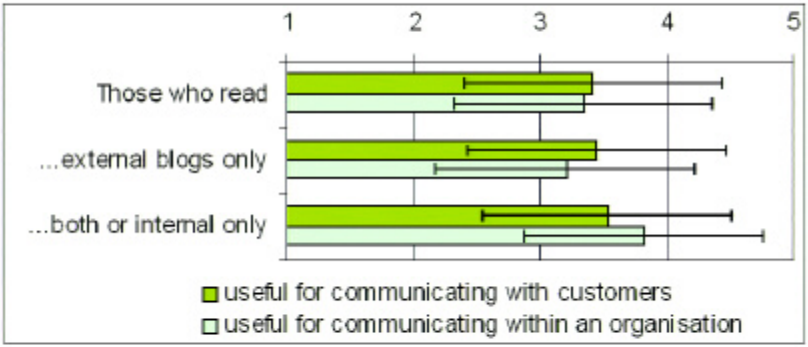
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- But there are others who believe in it
- And it's not that small...

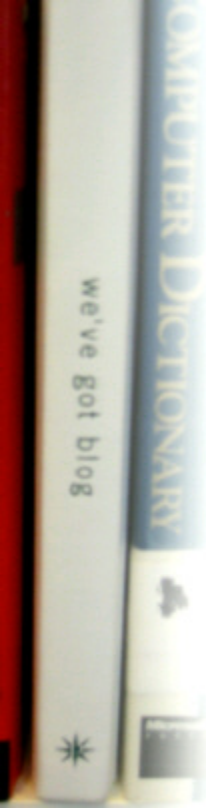
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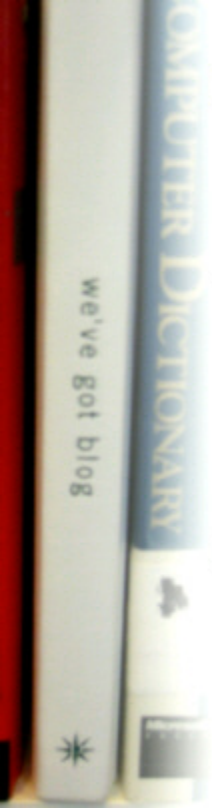
Internal blogs (2)



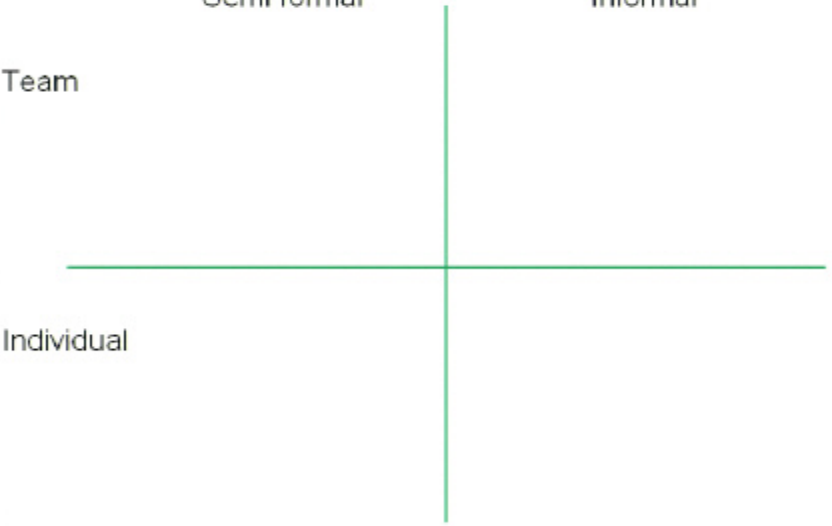


Internal blogs (3)

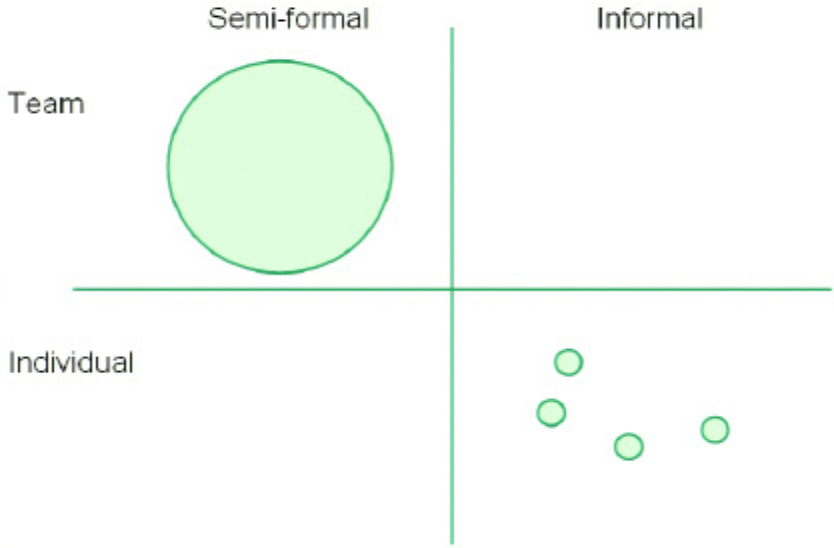
- Interesting uses
  - internal blog documenting work and available resources + email notification once in a while
  - internal blog as a space to collect materials that go into email newsletter
  - team progress reports
- Barriers
  - what is the value?
  - lack of stable infrastructure
  - finding a space between email and SharePoint
  - "if I can share it internally Microsoft-wide most likely it could go externally as well"
  - access when on the move



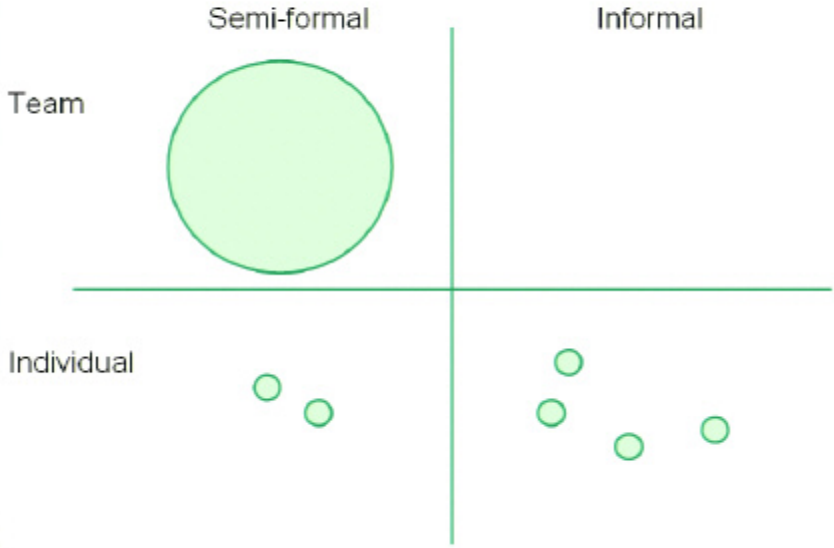
Product blogs

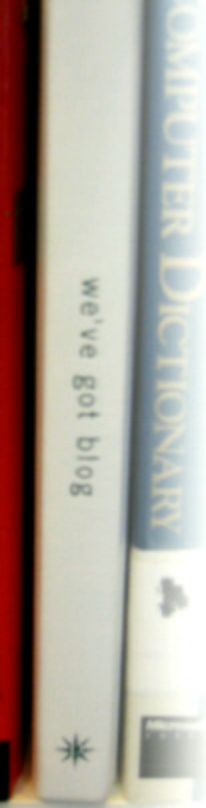


Product blogs



Product blogs

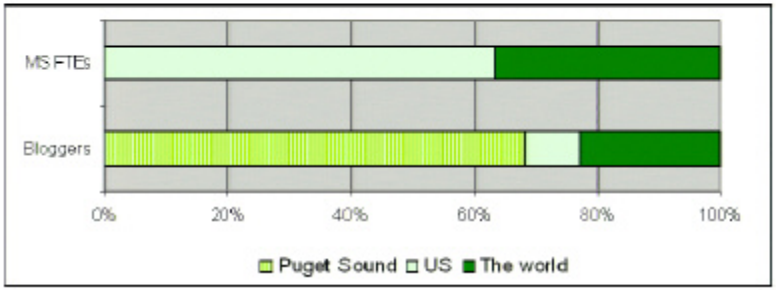




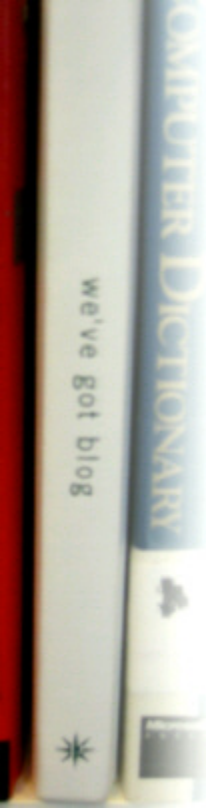
Product blogs (2)

- Bigger readership, more impact, more risks
- Individual contributions
- Editorial workflows
  - DL, SharePoint queue, weekly meetings
  - Editorial
  - Check if topic is ok
  - Discuss/agree on potentially controversial posts
  - Check by at least 2 people
  - Run through DL that includes marketing people
- Issues
  - Delays (up to 3 weeks)
  - Involvement of team members
  - Pain of being edited

Blogging outside Redmond

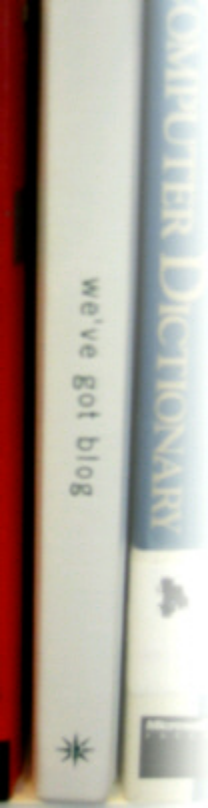


- Connecting with local customers
  - Local languages!
  - Local platforms
- Local face of Microsoft
- Different degrees of awareness and support for blogging



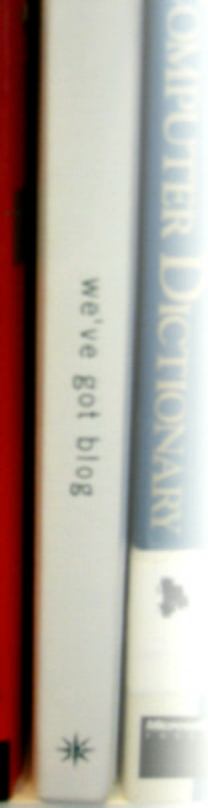
Technologies around blogging

- Blog reading
  - Many people use Bloglines – web-based!
  - Internal blogs: difficulty of accessing
  - Outlook integration:
- Blog statistics
  - Some bloggers could easily cite their "numbers" and use it for fine-tuning interactions with their audiences
- Email
  - Notifications about blog posts by email
  - Overload with questions/comments
- SharePoint, OneNote, other tools, white board
  - Ideas and drafts for posts
  - Editorial workflow in case of product blogs



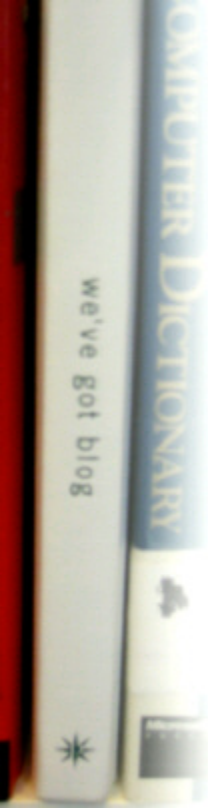
Personal passions and business needs

- Blogging about personal things?
- Spending work hours on blogging?
- Blogging and commitments?
- Product associated with your name?
- Feeling responsible for the whole company?
- Content ownership?



Implications

- There is more to blogging than connecting with customers at MSDN and TechNet
- Integration within the company
  - Awareness
  - Product blogging – good practices and tools to support editorial
  - Access rights
  - Being smart with metrics
  - Decision-making and ownership



Questions? Comments?

- For those watching this on video – your feedback is appreciated
  - Lilia Efimova – lilia.efimova@telin.nl (also at blog.mathemagenic.com)
  - Jonathan Grudin – jgrudin@microsoft.com
  - Gina Venolia – ginav@microsoft.com